

Yeshiva University Commentator

YCSC
Election Preview
Pages 8-9



April 1, 1998 / Nisan 3 5758

The Official Undergraduate Newspaper of Yeshiva College

www.yucommentator.com

Volume LXII No. 10



Hundreds pack Lampport Auditorium
to celebrate RIETS Chag HaSemikha

Kollel Elyon to be Disbanded at Year's End Allegations that Termination is an Attack Against Rabbi Kahn

BY NOAH STREIT

On Thursday, March 26th, Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel Rabbi Aharon Kahn entered the room in which he teaches and announced to his shiur that he would no longer be the Rosh Kollel, because the Kollel had been disbanded. The Gruss Kollel Elyon, of which Rabbi Kahn is currently the Rosh Kollel, will be terminated at the end of this year, owing to lack of funding, according to administrators. However cries of foul play have emanated from the mouths of several Roshei Yeshiva and students citing the belief that the university administrators are able to find funding and choose not to for a variety of reasons.

History

The Kollel Elyon, was founded in 1982 by a wealthy philanthropist by the name of Joseph Gruss. Gruss gave money to many Yeshiva University causes. The Kollel was meant to provide three years of study for those who gained entry into the program. Entrance requirements are rabbinic ordination, interviews and success on a series of tests given by several roshei yeshiva. Each Kollel member receives \$18,000 a year and if they chose to live adjacent to the campus, they are awarded another \$5,000 to help out with housing costs, bringing the stipend that most Kollel members received to \$23,000 a year, totaling \$69,000 over three years. Generally there have been 10 members in the Kollel each year.

Gruss initially funded the Kollel for ten years. Through the business acumen of those involved with overseeing the funds, they managed to extend the Kollel funding for another six years, however unlike the

usual endowment that is given for these programs, the funds have dried up. (An endowment differs from a donation because, the money used from an endowment is the interest that the endowment bears as opposed to a donation where the principal is used.

Rabbi Kahn explained that "the Kollel Elyon is the crown jewel of the institution. It gave the yeshiva the opportunity to train Talmidei Chachamim who can hold their own in comparison to the superior element in any Yeshiva. The members play a major role of inspiration and guidance for the community at large and for Yeshiva University." Rabbi Kahn then pointed to several of the Kollel's past members who now are roshei yeshiva and rabbis at YU: Rabbi Adler who will be a rosh yeshiva next year, Roshei Yeshiva Rabbis Rosenswieg and Twersky, Rabbi Hirsch who teaches in BMP, Rabbi Jacobson who teaches in JSS and Rabbis Simon and Sobolovsky among several others.

Rosh Yeshiva and Dean of RIETS Rabbi Charlop also mentioned the various Kollel members who now hold positions in YU and called the program "very successful."

New Programs

Vice President of RIETS Rabbi Hirt explained that the Kollel Elyon "had an illusion of permanence, even though the dollars would not support this thesis. The Kollel Elyon was not an endowment, it was a good investment... that produced people who became internal and external models... and achieved what its intentions were."

However since the money has been used up, the administration

continued on page 3

Chag HaSemikha Celebrated

Ne'eman's Visit Unpublicized

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

In a ceremony described as "moving and inspirational," one hundred and thirty three rabbis celebrated their formal rabbinic ordinations on Sunday, March 22, at the quadrennial Chag HaSemikha (ordination ceremony) of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS).

Over 1300 people attended the Chag HaSemikha in the Main Building's Lampport Auditorium on a day that saw the first serious snowfall of the year, in order to witness the ordination of the RIETS classes from 1995-98. They heard speeches and presentations from various rabbis and laypeople, including a surprise address from Yaakov Ne'eman, the Israeli Minister of Finance. The musniakhim themselves varied in their backgrounds, ages, geographic locations and professions, and included several sons of YU rabbis and Roshei Yeshiva.

"RIETS is the oldest and largest Orthodox seminary in

North America," said Rabbi Norman Lamm, President and Rosh HaYeshiva of RIETS. "Since its founding over 100 years ago, RIETS has ordained more than 2,500 rabbis. They occupy a significant majority of Orthodox pulpits in North America, and are helping to assure that Jewish values and tradition are perpetuated and preserved."

The ceremony began with Rabbi M. Mitchell Serels, director of the University's Sephardic Community Programs, serving as Herald and ushering in the rabbinic faculty of the various schools, the honorees, and the administrators and the newly minted rabbis.

Rabbi Judah Feinerman, the chairman of the RIETS Board of Trustees and a YU musmakh, served as the convocation chairman. He opened the ceremonies by asking all present to rise for the national anthem and Hatikvah, sung by Cantor Bernard Beer, Director of the Belz School of Jewish Music.

The Vice-President for

Administration and Professional Education of RIETS, Rabbi Robert S. Hirt, welcomed all the participants, and delineated the role of a yeshiva by quoting from the speech given by Rabbi Dr. Bernard Revel at the inaugural Chag HaSemikha in 1919. "For the Yeshiva is the very lifeblood of Israel's existence, the sanctuary of the Jewish soul, and the nursery of the Jewish spirit, where it was nurtured, and were it found solace and comfort during untold generations."

Hirt then proceeded to introduce Rabbi Marc D. Angel, President of the Rabbinic Alumni of RIETS, who presented an award of recognition on their fortieth anniversary homecoming to the semikha class of 1958. Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, rabbi of Kahal Jeshurun and principal of the Ramaz Hebrew Day School, accepted the award in the name of his entire class of musmakhim. Both Rabbis Angel and

continued on page 3

Lamm Appoints Acting Academic VP

Wurzweiler Dean to Assume New Duties

BY MORDECHAI FISHMAN

President Norman Lamm has named Dr. Sheldon Gelman, the dean of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, as the interim Vice-President for Academic Affairs effective July 1.

Gelman will serve as the chief academic administrator of YU during the search to find a permanent replacement for Dr. William Schwartz, who resigned his position after serving as Academic VP for nearly five years. During his interim vice-presidency, Gelman will continue in his post as dean of the social work school, a position he has held since 1990.

In his comments concerning the new appointment to acting VP, Lamm said "Sheldon Gelman is an outstanding administrator as well as a respected scholar. Under his leadership, Wurzweiler has grown and flourished. We are indeed fortunate that he has agreed to serve the broader University community during this time of transition."

"Dr. Lamm asked me to assume the position of interim vice-president until the formal search for an individual to fill the position on a permanent basis could be completed," said Gelman. "I welcome this new challenge. It is an honor to be able to serve the University in this larger capacity and I look forward to working

with the other deans and administrators."

Gelman explained that his duties "will not just consist of merely opening the mail. I will be performing the role of academic advocate for the entire university, and will support and help other deans in whatever situations or needs may arise." As an interim VP, Gelman said he would not undertake any major new initiatives such as attempting to create a new school or supervising a full scale assessment of any of the University's divisions, but rather he hoped to administer the office in a manner that would deal with all matters on the current agenda and lay the groundwork for any future work that may be needed. He specifically mentioned the upcoming Ten-Year Middle States Review, an accreditation inspection of the entire university, which is scheduled to take place in the year 2001. "We will begin the preliminary reports and paperwork," said Gelman, "These things are extremely large and take massive amounts of preparation beforehand."

Gelman singled out other issues in the realm of academic affair for attention as well. The Executive Council, an inordinately large administrative body widely viewed by many in the University as ineffectual and unwieldy, was mentioned by Gelman as something he would

like to possibly change or modify. A proposal to "split the Council into multiple bodies" was to be looked at, said the new interim VP.

He also indicated that his oversight of academic issues would heavily involve academic input from faculty and other deans. As to how he planned on being able to carry out his duties as both dean and vice-president, Gelman said he would be able to do this because he can "rely upon our outstanding deans and dedicated administrators at Wurzweiler and throughout the University to assure that business is conducted smoothly."

While the Office of Academic Affairs officially has purview over the entire YU, Gelman pointed out that his duties will not include matters concerning AECOM or RIETS, each of which have their own respective vice-presidents, Dr. Dominick Purpura and Rabbi Robert Hirt. Nor will his new position involve the high schools, said Gelman for "that would be a full-time job in of itself."

When asked by *The Commentator* as to whether he saw himself as a candidate for the permanent position of Academic VP, Gelman replied "I don't know." He also expressed his ambivalence about even desiring the job, saying "It is an

continued on page 7

• Kollel Elyon • Goes Down

• The administration is about to disband one of the stalwarts of Yeshiva University and of the Orthodox community at large. The university has announced that the Kollel Elyon will be disbanded at the end of this year due to lack of funding.

The Kollel Elyon has been in existence since 1982. In the sixteen years of its existence, it has produced rabbinical leaders both in and outside of the yeshiva. Currently, two of our own roshei yeshiva and many others rabbis who teach in our institution were members of this program. In fact the program has received such renown that several rabbis across the country have already commented on its termination including one rabbi who stated "they are trying to tear every last bit of kedusha out of the place [YU]."

The administration claims that the funding has run out. While we do not dispute this claim, we find it hard to believe that YU cannot pool its resources or find donors to continue funding the Kollel Elyon.

If YU is terminating the Kollel Elyon because it disagrees with its philosophical leanings or in an attempt to curb the influence of a certain Rosh Yeshiva, it should seriously reconsider its course of action. The Kollel Elyon has an outstanding reputation outside our yeshiva. No educational institution can suffer the loss of one of its most respected programs without it effecting the morale and reputation of the school.

Conversations with various administrators seemed devoid of any sense of loss. A remark such as "Well, I'm sure that the students who would have been part of the Kollel Elyon can qualify for another kollel," is indicative of this troubling attitude. We find it hard to believe that this program could be so casually dismissed. The kollel is such an integral part of this university that every effort should be made to ensure that it continues. Perhaps our eloquent administrators could persuade at least one of YU's benefactors that the Kollel Elyon is worth saving.



FROM THE EDITOR

ARI KAHN

Discrimination and Designer Plagues

The Albert Einstein College of Medicine may soon be joining an ambitious project to map the "Jewish" genome. The possible repercussions of this endeavor are limited in their horror only by human imagination. Follow me through the science and discover for yourselves that this is no exaggeration.

On the surface, this project seems harmless, beneficial even, and the motives are relatively simple. For a geneticist, this is an opportunity to study a semi-isolated gene pool. While many people have left the Jewish community through assimilation, comparably few have entered over the centuries. The only ways to introduce new genes into the Jewish community are either through mutations, which are pretty rare, or through outsiders marrying in and bringing their new genes with them. The persecution suffered by Jews over the past millennia limited the number of willing converts, thus precluding the entrance of outsiders and their genes, while leading to the genetic isolation of the Jewish community.

The regular Jewish scientist/researcher

sees in this project the opportunity to study problems close to his heart, the medical problems of the Jewish community. He hopes this can lead to a greater understanding of diseases that mainly affect Jews, like Tay-sachs and Gouche's, and that this new understanding will lead to a cure. In fact, many Jews are advocating the launch of this project without fully realizing the possible consequences.

Some of these consequences have already surfaced. A study of the ashkenazic women of Silver Spring, MD, revealed an alarmingly high incidence of two Breast Cancer genes: BRCA1 and BRCA2. While neither of these two genes guarantees that a carrier will develop cancer, their risk of developing cancer is exceptionally high. These two genes became known as "Jewish" genes because they occur relatively frequently in the Jewish population.

Insurance companies have already moved to adjust their rates to reflect this newly discovered risk in Jewish women. If a woman's positive result is revealed to the insurance company they immediately raise their rates. Even if the results are not

revealed or a Jewish woman is not tested for these genes, she will still pay a higher premium as this new rate structure develops around this risk.

This is not just a problem for the Jewish woman. Men will face the same problem as their genes are heavily studied and thoroughly explored.

Employers will take genetic tests into account. They want employees who will stay healthy and be able to contribute to their company for many years. A perception of Jews as a diseased people will, in effect, lead to employer discrimination against Jews for what they will justify as a practical financial cause because who wants to hire someone who always gets sick? The situation is worse if an employer offers insurance coverage because his rates go up with each incident of cancer among the employees. No employer wants to pay higher rates and if they feel they can avoid higher payments by not hiring "risky" Jews, they will again discriminate against Jews.

There is no law preventing this kind of discrimination from either the insurance companies or employers.

However, the scariest possible consequence, a "jew bomb," involves a discovery announced by researchers studying biological weapons. They claim to have the ability to tailor their warfare agents so they will only affect people with certain genes. They demonstrated, and further research supported, their customizing technique in two ways. These genes can activate the disease, causing everyone with the activator genetic sequence to suf-

fer the effects and leaving those without the sequence unaffected. Or, the genes can inhibit the disease leaving those with the sequence unaffected while the disease ravages the rest of the population.

As we study Jewish genes and their secrets are revealed to the public, we are providing our enemies with the ability to create plagues designed to kill only Jews. Delivery of this agent could be as simple as dumping it into an upstate reservoir and would result in a virtual wipeout of New York City's Jews.

No other ethnic group is undergoing such genetic scrutiny. While the temptation to look for possible cures is hard to resist, there are currently no effective techniques for treating any genetic disease. Our research just provides us with additional problems, no solutions: We know BRCA1 may lead to cancer, and we can easily test for it, but then what? A woman with a positive result has no recourse, only worry.

So, is there any purpose served by testing for this and countless other harmful genes? How about revealing the results of these tests to a patient?

Many ethicist say no.

Instead of spending our money finding more problems, we should concentrate on finding solutions, effective treatments whose techniques might apply across the broad spectrum of genetic diseases.

It appears that we must approach this like JEOPARDY!, knowing the tentative answers before we go after the questions.

The Commentator

500 West 185th Street, New York, NY 10033, E-Mail: commie@yucommentator.com. Telephone and Fax: (212) 740-2155. Published bi-weekly during the academic year by the Yeshiva College Student Council. The views expressed in the signed columns are those of the writers alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *The Commentator*, the student body, the faculty, or the Administration of Yeshiva University. We do not endorse any of the products or services advertised in these pages. Copyright 1997, *The Commentator*. One issue free, \$1.00 for each additional issue.

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Chag HaSemikha

Continued from page 1

Lookstein were present not only as rabbinic participants, but as proud parents as well, with their sons included in the current class of new musmakhim.

Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, Dean of RIETS, presented the newly minted rabbis to the public, reading off their names one by one. The rabbis rose individually upon hearing their names, and at the culmination of the list thunderous applause rippled through the hall as parents, friends and associates of the rabbinic graduates acclaimed their accomplishments.

Speaking for all of his fellow musmakhim was Rabbi Ari Berman, an assistant rabbi at the Jewish Center of New York City, and a fellow in the Gruss Kollel Elyon. A graduate of MTA, YC, Revel, and RIETS, Berman thanked his rabbis and teachers saying "The rabbeim here do not act as aloof academics or remote rabbis, but treat us, their talmidim, with care and devotion...all are treated with almost parental concern."

Rabbi Herbert C. Dobrinsky, Vice-President for University Affairs, then introduced the philanthropist Jacob Glueck, who was presented by Rabbi Lamm with the Etz Chaim award, the highest honor bestowed by RIETS. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivat Kfar Etzion in Israel, was the recipient of the inaugural Rabbi Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik Aluf Torah Award.

Israeli Finance Minister Honored

In a gesture that was previously unannounced and unpublicized, Rabbi Israel Miller, Senior Vice-President Emeritus, introduced Yaakov Ne'eman, Minister of Finance of the State of Israel, who received the Ne'eman Yisrael award from Rabbi Lamm.

Ne'eman is the cabinet minister who headed the commission empowered by the Netanyahu government to prepare a proposal concerning religious conversion in Israel and what role, if any, is to be played by the Reform and Conservative denominations in the process. The commission's proposal is the source of much contention and controversy within rabbinic circles, with R' Lamm endorsing the proposal, while many YU rabbis are in vehement opposition.

Ne'eman's appearance at the Chag HaSemikha was not widely publicized beforehand, with no mention of his name in either the official YU publication *YU Today* or the special supplement given to participants in the event, leading many to wonder why this was so.

Notably absent from the proceedings was MYP and RIETS Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Hershey Shachter. Some speculated that this was out of protest at the perceived institutional endorsement of the minister and his commission's proposal. Asked by *The Commentator* why he was not in attendance, R' Shachter replied "I was not feeling well."

When asked by *The Commentator* who invited Mr. Ne'eman to address the Chag HaSemikha, R' Lamm answered "I did." He also indicated that the invitation was tendered well in advance, and knowledge of Ne'eman's scheduled appearance was had months prior to

the ceremony. So why was there no publicity? "Because of security issues," said the president. "We did not want protesters, demonstrators and crazies like there have been at other events." R' Lamm was referring to the Orthodox Union dinner, where his acceptance speech of the Ohev Hashem award was interrupted by a vocal heckler who had to be escorted from the premises.

When further queried by *The Commentator* if there was opposition from any of the YU Roshei Yeshiva to the Ne'eman invitation, R' Lamm said "None that I heard of. I am the Rosh HaYeshiva, and this is my province."

Hirt concurred with the security rationale as a reason for the lack of prior publicity concerning Ne'eman's appearance, but also stated that Political considerations played a role. "We did not want anyone to utilize the event for a particular political agenda. The focus should be on the torah nature of the event, not the politics." Citing the historic fiftieth anniversary of Israeli statehood as the reason for Ne'eman being invited, Hirt said "There is no political message in his presence here [at the Chag HaSemikha], but there is a Klal Yisrael perspective which is expressed by his presence."

Hirt also cited Ne'eman's long-standing personal attachment and involvement with YU. According to Mashgiach Ruchani Rabbi Yosef Blau, Ne'eman was a student in YU during the 1955-56 school year, when they were both members of Rabbi Yerucham Gorelick's gemara shiur. A personal friend of YU Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Meir Goldwicht, Ne'eman learned b'chavruta with R' Goldwicht in the main Beit Midrash, during a sabbatical year when he was teaching at New York University Law School.

Some in the University speculated that a deal had been made between the Roshei Yeshiva and the administration, with the rabbis agreeing not to boycott the event if there would be no publicity concerning Ne'eman's appearance. This would give the rabbis plausible deniability, and their presence at the ceremony would not be construed by any as an endorsement of Minister Ne'eman or his commission, tacit or otherwise.

"Absolutely false," said Hirt. "There was no deal. None. There is no basis for that supposition." Hirt said that all members of the rabbinic faculty were aware of Ne'eman's scheduled appearance, and produced the minutes of a joint meeting of the RIETS Rabbinic Alumni Executive Committee that had been mailed out to all rabbinic alumni and Roshei Yeshiva to support his assertion.

The minutes are dated Wednesday, December 10, 1997, and state "The Aluf HaTorah award will be given to the first recipient Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein at the Chag HaSemikha, and Finance Minister Yaakov Ne'eman, who learned for a year in our yeshiva, will receive an award at the Chag HaSemikha."

The keynote address was given by R' Lamm, in which he congratulated the musmakhim on their attaining the rabbinate and charged them with leading the way into the twenty-first century for future generations of Torah Jews.

The Rav's Pursuit of Halakhic Truth

Rabbi Blau Delivers Torah U'Madda Lecture to YC Students

BY JESSE MENDELSON

On Tuesday, March 24 in the Rubin shul, Rabbi Yosef Blau delivered the first lecture of Yeshiva University's Torah U-Madda Project, Spring 1998 evening lecture series. Rabbi Blau, *Mashgiach Ruchani* of the Mazer Yeshiva Program and the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, entitled his lecture "From the Legacy of the Rav - The Rav's Attitude Towards Halakhic Truth: The Rav as Posek."

R' Blau contended that the Rav's views on halakha were not widely discussed because he published very little on the subject. The reason for this, said R' Blau, is that the Rav felt that the most important part of the halakhic process was not the final decision, but the method used to arrive at that decision. It is for this reason that there were some who interpreted a number of the Rav's statements as contradictory. According to R' Blau, this stems from the fact that the Rav judged each situation differently, taking into account not only the literal halakhic ruling, but the pertinent circumstantial factors as well.

R' Blau gave an example of this principle in action. When the young Blau was asked to be a scholar-in-residence at a synagogue that did not have a mechitza, he sought the input of the Rav. The Rav told him that he was allowed to speak there, but should not daven there. Interestingly enough, however, the rabbi of the synagogue had received the Rav's permission to be a rabbi there. According to R' Blau, this is an instance in which someone could misconstrue the two rulings of the Rav and believe them to be contradictory.

R' Blau maintained that the main feature of any of the Rav's shiurim on halakha was the lack of a definitive answer. Always interested in the creative process, the Rav was so convincing in explaining the thought processes behind a particular viewpoint that people came to believe that this was the Rav's own position. His personal position,

in fact, mattered very little to the Rav when deciding a question posed to him. Even his influential book, *Halakhic Man*, was not a personal opinion. As R' Blau put it, "Ish HaHalacha is Rav Chaim [Soloveitchik], Rav Moshe [Feinstein], Rav Velvel [the Rav's uncle]; but not the Rav - he never says it is himself. He is just explaining a viewpoint."

In order to fully comprehend the Rav's view of *naikha*, according to R' Blau, one must realize that the Rav believed that halakha accepts multi-valued truths. An example given is that of *bein hashmashot* (twilight), a sort of halakhic no man's land. This period is usually seen as either day or night; the Rav saw it as day and night. Although day and night are distinct, halakha accepts that they are both possible at the same time.

As the lecture neared its close, R' Blau hammered the point home that in the Rav's Halakhic rulings everything was taken into account. "The history and unity of the Jewish people are fundamental themes in many of the Rav's talks and writings," R' Blau maintained. Halakha is sensitive to cultural and technological change, and every new scientific invention gives halakha a new category to analyze. In rulings the Rav issued, the key was not the actual decision at which he arrived, but rather how he came to that decision.

Even though the attendance was embarrassingly sparse - only twenty students and no faculty in attendance - those who did attend enjoyed the lecture. Eric Schubert, YC '99, exclaimed, "While listening to Rabbi Blau's speech, I realized the importance of the halakhic process, not just the outcome. To understand why we do certain things is an often overlooked aspect of Jewish life. It is unfortunate that I did not have the opportunity to hear the Rav while he was alive."

Information about upcoming lectures Torah U-Madda Project lectures is available through Joshua Cypress who may be contacted at all hours of the night at (212) 927-6692.

Kollel Elyon

Continued from page 1

has been searching for endowments to fund new permanent programs. Last year, one such program was created called Machon Barren, endowed by Mr. Barren. Hirt explained that the Barren program "follows in that line of reasoning [of the Kollel Elyon]. It allows them to continue learning in a structured manner." The entry requirements are somewhat similar, but students are strongly encouraged to enroll in a concurrent graduate program. Rabbi Hirt also stressed that "the capacity for leadership" is strongly weighed when deciding upon the candidates and along with their studies their studies students are asked to act in various capacities on behalf of the community. The stipend is similar to the amount provided for members of the Kollel Elyon and like the Kollel Elyon the program lasts three years. This year's members are Asaf Bednarsh and Shalom Rosner, next year's members will be Zvi Romm and Eitan Mayer.

Rabbi Hirt also stated that the administration is currently searching for endowments for similar programs that will create leaders for the next generation of Orthodox Jewry.

Controversy

The question has arisen as to whether the Kollel is being terminated for purely monetary reasons or as a slight to Rabbi Kahn who previously had some "run-ins" with the administration, particularly President Lamm.

According to Rabbi Charlop, "If there would have money, I don't believe anything would have happened." Rabbi Hirt also denied this rumor citing monetary reasons. Rabbi Kahn explained that he did not believe that the rumor had validity, but that he did not understand why new money could not be found to continue this program.

However some students and administrators who spoke on the condition of anonymity suggested that the reasons for the Kollel Elyon's termination were not limited to monetary reasons. One Rabbi explained that YU has a vast amount of money and many donors who would continue to support this program. He ventured to say the reasons for the termination were twofold.

He explained that the administration has developed a growing dislike for Rabbi Kahn and is either not finding new funds or not providing new funds as a way to limit Rabbi Kahn's influence because he often speaks out against Yeshiva University and Rabbi Lamm. The second reason mentioned was the perception that many of the Kollel Elyon members were too far to the right and if the university is going to fund programs that will create future leaders and rabbis, they want their prodigy to be centrist and follow in the philosophical understanding of Judaism espoused by Rabbi Lamm and other proponents of Torah U'madda.

YESHIVA COLLEGE



CAMPUS NEWS

Senate Passes Proposal to Modify Composition Requirements

*Composition II Would be Replaced
by Content Based Writing Courses*

BY CHANAN HOSCHANDER

The Yeshiva College and Sy Syms School of Business Senate has passed a proposal which calls for and outlines the revision of *Composition + Rhetoric 1102*, the second of the English Composition classes required for all Yeshiva University Main Campus undergraduate students. An experimental program which will partner a writing course with a traditional content based class, is slated to be offered to students by the Spring of 1999. Completion of this course will satisfy the current English Composition II requirement.

The Senate has jurisdiction over various academic affairs at YU's Main Campus. It is responsible for investigating matters relating to academic standards, admissions policy, curriculum, and degree requirements. However, its proposals are non-binding and are considered to be suggestions to the faculty and deans. Last year, the Senate, which is comprised of students as well as faculty members and deans, passed a proposal which paved the way for SSSB students to minor in Yeshiva College.

This academic year there is a consensus among Senators that the writing ability of the typical graduating student is inadequate. In order to remedy the situation, they have proposed the creation of an experimental course which may eventually replace the English Composition II requirement.

According to the text of the proposal, the experimental course will entail a writing class which will be "loosely associated" with another class in a student's major area of study. The instruction in the writing class would pertain to the content and syllabus of the counterpart course. The writing class would be taught by a "professor of composition who possesses some background in the subject of the counterpart course and is thereby familiar with the material."

The purpose of this program is twofold. The primary goal is to create a structure for the English Composition II requirement. It is also hoped that students will be more interested in devoting effort to honing their writing skills, aiding their academic achievement in their major.

Students will be required to enroll in both the writing course and its partner class, which will be treated for credit purposes as two separate classes. Subject matter, as well as specific course material, is to be coordinated by the instructors and departments of both courses. Details concerning adding or dropping one of these courses have yet to be decided upon.

This proposal was initiated as a result of the perceived lack of basic writing skills among many graduates. The belief was that this flaw stemmed from a variety of sources, the most visible of which was the standard English Composition II course. This class has been maligned by students and professors alike for its amor-

phous quality. Unlike most other courses offered in YC, *Composition + Rhetoric 1102* does not have a standardized curriculum. There are no predetermined texts or written assignments that must be included within the the course's curriculum.

The Senate investigation determined that the absence of a regular syllabus has created a situation in which the goals of the course are not clearly defined. This has caused an inordinate amount of difficulty for instructors who create courses with an unfocused character that fail to promote student interest.

This contention has, however, been disputed by some in the English Department which determines the official guidelines for the course. Among the course aims listed by the department, are the ability to defend a thesis and to produce an analytical research paper. Yet, the concerns expressed in the Senatorial forum provoked action.

In October, the Senate set up a task force in order to investigate the need and feasibility of a general revision of the writing curriculum. Neil Berman, a student Senator, was slated to head this task force consisting of both student and faculty members of the Senate.

After extensive investigation, the task force introduced an early version of the proposal of the pilot program which it hopes will replace the current English Composition II requirement. When the proposal was introduced to the larger Senate body, many reservations were addressed. Among these reservations was the potential need for new professors qualified to teach the writing course. The task force quelled these fears by showing that a number of the writing instructors currently on staff, have qualifications in other fields of academic study and could be considered candidates for the professorial positions of the new content related course.

After minor revisions, the proposal was unanimously ratified on February 12. Subsequently, the proposal was handed over to the English department, which in conjunction with the other academic departments will determine determine if and what changes will be made to the status quo. Dr. Joan Haahr, who is currently heading up the English Department analysis of the proposal, claimed that the department "hasn't discussed the proposal at all yet. It will come up in the next meeting." She suggested, that any decision would be postponed until Dr. William Lee returns from sabbatical, since he was the faculty member from the English Department who took part in this Senate proposal.

Norman Adler, Dean of Yeshiva College, stressed the need for improved writing skills among all YC students. Although he did not specifically endorse the Senate proposal, he expressed the fact that he is "very enthusiastic about seeing emphasis on writing spread throughout the curriculum."

Genetic Screening Causes Controversy

BY AARON KLEIN

Dor Yeshorim, an international genetic testing program operating within the Jewish community, was brought to Yeshiva University by YCSC on Tuesday March 10, giving students an opportunity to utilize its services. The program is aimed at couples who wish to get married, and determines their genetic compatibility by screening the blood of each individual and testing for evidence of unexpressed (recessive) genetic diseases.

Dor Yeshorim was started in 1985 by Rabbi Joseph Eckstein, who had four children born with Tay-Sachs disease, an incurable degenerative disease primarily found in Jews of Eastern European Ashkenazi descent. The organization has since been endorsed by many rabbinic authorities including Rabbi Elya Svei, Rabbi Shmuel Yackov Weinberg, and Rabbi Shmuel Berenbaum. As of now, Dor Yeshorim tests for four diseases that are prevalent in the Jewish community: Tay-Sachs, Cystic Fibrosis, Canavan Disease, and Fanconi Anemia.

If a man and a woman are both carriers of the genes that cause a particular disease, there is a 25 percent chance that their offspring will express the symptoms of that disease. If one of the couple tests negative, the child will not have the symptoms for that disease, regardless of the other parent's genetic status.

The testing process of Dor Yeshorim is regarded by many as somewhat unusual: A couple has blood taken and each receives a unique identification number used to receive the results over the phone. Individual results are not disclosed. The only information provided is whether the two specific numbers are compatible. Frances Berkwits, M.S., a genetic counselor for Dor Yeshorim, claims the reason

that individual results are not revealed is because "It is often difficult for people to cope with individual carrier status, and we do this out of concern for those identified as carriers."

The price, which many students regard as high, is \$120 per individual tested (YU students received a \$20 discount). Berkwits claims that the entire cost is used to pay the laboratories that Dor Yeshorim has contracted to carry out the actual testing on the blood. She says, "The thing with putting an amount on our testing is that next week the labs might raise the prices. Because of the large volume of blood samples we take, we have negotiated with fully qualified laboratories at a discounted fee of about \$100 per specimen."

According to the Hematology Department of Temple University, the actual testing that Dor Yeshorim requires costs a lab an estimated \$35 per specimen if carried out in bulk. Mass genetic screening has long been a subject of great debate among both doctors and ethicists around the world. Rabbi Moshe Dovid Tendler, *Rosh Yeshiva*, Professor of Biology, and Professor of Jewish Medical Ethics, posted a letter entitled "The Planned Genetic Screening at Yeshiva University: An Appeal to Logic" around campus. In it, he disagreed with when the tests are taken, writing that "The 'secret' testing by 'Dor Yeshorim' might have once been of value and may yet be useful in the Chasidic communities who have little contact with modern genetic information. It does not make sense for the Yeshiva College and Stern College communities."

R' Tendler was referring to the Chasidic practice of arranging marriages, something that is extremely rare in the YU

continued on page 6

Financial Aid Processing for 1998-1999 Underway

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

The Office of Student Finances has made available the Financial aid applications for the coming academic year. The application can be filled out either on paper or electronically, but the deadline for both is April 15.

In order to apply for financial aid, whether from federal or University sources, students and parents must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Student Finances strongly requests that applicants use financial information from a completed 1997 1040 form only. The FAFSA is the only form that is required to apply for aid. New York State residents will be sent a TAP application by NYS HESC based upon filling the FAFSA.

Everyone is urged to complete the FAFSA through the web. Renewal and original FAFSA forms may be accessed at

The FAFSA is the document that collects information regarding family finances and is used to compute eligibility for all aid programs. Yeshiva University's Title IV code number is "002903" and MUST be listed in Section "C". The results of the FAFSA (SAR) will be electronically transmitted to YU by the federal processor if our TITLE IV code number has been listed.

PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY in completing all forms. Errors and missing information will result in delayed processing and decreased availability of aid. Be sure to use the student's full legal name in completing all applications.

Student Finances is aware of the complexities of requesting financial aid and stands ready to assist parents and students. Please do not hesitate to consult with them if you have any questions at (212) 960-5269.



Fred Drasner
Chief Executive Officer

An Open Letter to Students Planning to Attend Law School from *U.S. News & World Report*



Dear Student:

DON'T YOU JUST HATE TO BE GRADED? Well, by their shrill protests about *U.S. News & World Report* law school rankings, so do most of the deans of the law schools you are considering. However, as a law school graduate with both a J.D. and a LL.M. degree, I can tell you that these same deans will subject you to rigorous grading. You will be required to endure lectures from tenured professors who have not changed their class notes since the Battle of Hastings. Then, after attending class for a full semester, you will be given one exam to determine your grade. One exam, one semester, one grade. One roll of the dice to measure your performance.

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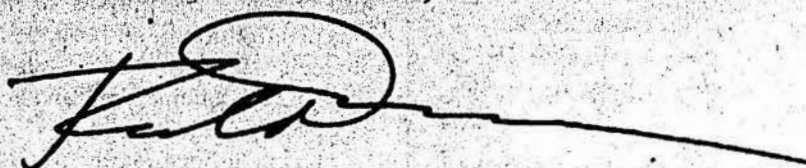
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Kindest Regards,

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Roth Scholars Announced

BY COMMENTATOR STAFF

After weeks of speculation, this year's Roth Scholars were announced last month. From YC, Aton Holzer, Chanan Hoschander, Josh Landa, Ben Ahdut and Yehuda Burns were named, with Chaim Herman and Yoseph Rudolph listed as first and second alternates, respectively. Stern nominees include Jennifer Feig, Malka Skiba and Shiva Shifteh, with Agnessa Miller as a third alternate.

The Roth Institute Scholars Program is designed for students with a demonstrated interest in biomedical research. Students work for ten weeks in a basic science laboratory at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine under the guidance of mentors in their fields of interest.

The program affords an opportunity to explore the world of biology in a serious, academic atmosphere, a "real world" experience. From it, students hope to learn research techniques, as well as skill in collecting and interpreting data. The program gives YU students a chance to interact not only with their friends and schoolmates, but also with students from around the New York area.

While every student works in his own lab, coordination comes from the graduate research division at Einstein. In addition to working in the lab, students present their research at a seminar attended by fellow Roth Scholars as well as other summer researchers at AECOM. Those participating are paid \$2000 and are given free apartments in the Einstein housing complex.

The selection process is based principally on merit, weighing factors such as GPA, performance in science courses and

letters of recommendation. An interview is also an important component of the decision-making process. One critical factor this year's selection was research experience. All of the selectees had some experience working in a lab over a summer.

Many of this year's applicants were discouraged to find out that their lack of research experience nearly precluded them from being chosen. One applicant commented, "They tell us to do research, we now have an opportunity, and they slam the door in our faces."

Dr. Kenneth Danishefsky, a biology professor on the selection committee, explained why experience is so important. As representatives of the school, the committee wants to ensure that these participating are more than simply qualified. Those with previous research experience have demonstrated a desire to work in the lab. This initiative is key. From the perspective of faculty at Einstein, those who've done work before are quicker to learn and can work more independently. These factors are very important in the decision-making process.

Even so, those participating are eagerly awaiting the experience. "I think it's a tremendous opportunity to do cutting edge research in a serious environment," said Holzer. Others were similarly eager to work because of what they would learn and the experience they would acquire. Burns, however, takes a different approach. "Previous work showed me that working in a lab can be fun. With all the competition involved in schoolwork, here's a chance to both learn and enjoy one's self."

Dor Yeshorim

Continued from page 4

community. When arranging a match, it is logical to test both individuals for compatibility after deciding on the shidduch. If the man and woman are incompatible the arrangement can be broken with no harm to either party. However, in a dating setting, individuals create emotional ties before deciding to get married. Therefore, testing after a couple have decided to get married can lead to harsh emotional and ethical dilemmas if the test results indicate that the partners are incompatible.

Rabbi Tendler also disagreed with the method of providing results. He writes "The purpose of a genetic test is to acquire information. Any student interested in taking these tests should be provided with the results of the test. A negative result removes all concerns when beginning the search for a husband or wife."

In response to Rabbi Tendler's letter, Sruli Tannenbaum, YCSC President, said "While I certainly respect Rabbi Tendler's beliefs, there are a number of other rabbim who endorse Dor Yeshorim. YCSC felt that they were doing the students a service by making an organization like Dor Yeshorim available. We didn't force students to utilize their services, we simply gave them a choice."

Rabbi Tendler feels that the rabbis who endorsed Dor Yeshorim did not fully evaluate the possible consequences of mass genetic screening with increased likelihood of finding genetic defects, both on the patient and on the community. He asked, "Have the rabbeim studied enough science to realize why most ethicists are opposed to mass genetic screening?" Rabbi Tendler expressed concern that finding a genetic defect in a man or woman "can lead to discrimination by insurance companies, employers, and others looking to be married."

Further Rabbi Tendler said, "There is much debate in the medical ethics profession as to the wisdom of mass screening... The introduction of this program into Yeshiva University gives our imprimatur before the decision to do so received the careful analysis demanded."

Many of the students who got tested by Dor Yeshorim were not happy with the cost, or the fact that they would not be told their individual carrier status. Daniel Erlich, a RIETS student said, "I think it's annoying. I only came here because it was convenient, I was going to go somewhere else." Kovi Smolack, a JSS/SSSB Senior said "I don't think it

makes sense not to give each person his or her results if they [Dor Yeshorim] have it right in front of them. It's not like they are saving us any emotional strife."

It is known that Dor Yeshorim has extended its genetic testing to include two more diseases without the recommendation of the scientific community or the world at large. In an age of rapidly advancing genetic technology in which almost anything seems possible, the question Rabbi Tendler poses is "Where do we stop?"

SYNOPSIS OF DISEASES TESTED BY DOR YESHORIM

Tay-Sachs disease is disproportionately present within the Ashkenazic Jewish community - about one in every thirty American Jews carries the gene. Children with Tay-Sachs lack an enzyme that is necessary for breaking down certain fatty substances in the brain and nerve cells. These fatty substances build up and gradually destroy the brain and nerve cells, until the entire central nervous system stops working. Death usually occurs by age five.

Cystic Fibrosis is an inherited metabolic disorder the chief symptom of which is the production of thick, sticky mucus that clogs the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts. There is an extremely high prevalence of Cystic Fibrosis within the Ashkenazic community.

Canavan Disease, which effects the central nervous system, is marked by degeneration of the brain. The carrier rate for the disease within the Jewish community is one in thirty-seven. Infants born with Canavan may appear normal at birth, with symptoms appearing in early infancy. Characteristic features include inability to support the head, seizures, spasticity, and enlargement of the head. Eventually, blindness and severe mental retardation set in. The life expectancy of patients with this disease vary; some children die in the first years of life, while others suffer into their teens.

Fanconi Anemia causes progressive bone marrow failure, a variety of limb and organ defects, short stature, and hyperpigmentation (dark skin color). These patients also report a high occurrence of cancer or leukemia. Life expectancy is eight to twelve years and the carrier rate in the Ashkenazic community has been estimated at one in seventy-five.

Cardozo Holds Recruitment Function For YU Undergraduates

BY AARON SCHLANGER

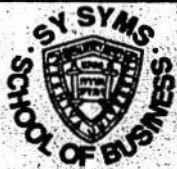
On Friday, March 13, The Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law of Yeshiva University held an open house for students of Yeshiva College, Sy Syms School for Business, and Stern College for Women. Students from each of the schools attended. Pre-Law Advisor, Dean Michael Hecht of Yeshiva College was also present. The purpose of the event was to introduce the school and faculty to students who have been accepted for the upcoming academic year, and to recruit prospective students.

The event began with Amy Gewirtz, an admissions counselor at Cardozo, highlighting certain aspects of the school. She discussed specific areas of the law, such as intellectual property, in which Cardozo is ranked among the top 10 law schools in the United States.

This was followed by a brief tour of the school building including the library.

After the tour, the students sat in on Professor Barry Scheck's Criminal Procedure class. Although said by many to be stimulating, the students said that they would have benefited more had they been given some background information about what would be discussed in the class.

The class was followed by a lunch. Present at the lunch were Robert Schwartz, the Director of Admissions at Cardozo, Michael Hertz, the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Nancy Kramer, the Director of Placement, and Dean Hecht. Each spoke about their respective areas and entertained questions that students had about Cardozo. Barry Scheck answered general questions that the students had about the legal profession.



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RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY APRIL 21, 1998

"Noshing with Nietzsche"

BY NATHAN MINTZ

Last Monday, a group of approximately twenty YC students gathered eagerly in the Office of the Dean to discuss the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche over a pizza lunch. The first essay in *The Genealogy of Morals* and the Interludes in *Beyond Good and Evil* served as texts for the discussion. This meeting was the most recent in a series of literary/philosophical luncheons that have been sponsored by the Office of the Dean, the English Honors Society, and the Philosophy Club of Yeshiva University.

An ample amount of pizza was served to those attending, but the feast had just begun. Next on the menu was a savory serving of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*. Yonatan Kaganoff, vice president of the English Honors Society and creator of the literary/philosophical luncheon discussions, began by expositing Nietzsche's views on morality.

Nietzsche, a nineteenth century thinker whose literary power and philosophical views stirred the minds of the intellectual communities of pre-World War Europe, offers a captivating critique of morality and questions the foundations of traditional value systems. The nihilistic philosopher's famous (though generally misunderstood) words "God is Dead" became the slogan for a rising crop of intellectual atheists. (Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" was second to the Bible in popularity amongst World War II soldiers.)

The luncheon continued with a spirited discussion of Nietzsche's ideals and conceptual foundations, and engendered animated dialogue between the students in attendance.

Past luncheon discussions have fea-

tured intriguing literary and intellectual works, such as Plato's *Ion* and Harold Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*. Using selected excerpts from Plato's *Ion* as texts, the first literary/philosophical discussion was an instant success. The group discussed Plato's written dialogue about the nature and inspiration of poetry, while Plato's conclusion that poetry is Divinely inspired became an issue of exciting debate among the students.

The next discussion took place several weeks later, using chapters from Bloom's highly acclaimed and controversial *Closing of the American Mind* as texts. In the book, Bloom lashes out against moral relativism (the notion that morality is relative to one's personal morals and values) and criticizes contemporary society which he claims is pervaded by moral relativism and refuses to acknowledge an absolute morality. The discussion group seemed to agree with the majority of Bloom's points.

Rabbi Shalom Carmy, faculty advisor to the literary/philosophical luncheon discussions, has provided guidance and added insight to the meetings. Instead of assuming his usual role of intellectually dominating professor (Cognitive Carmy or Carmy I), Rabbi Carmy has assumed a more passive, "one-of-the-guys" role (Homo Religiosus Carmy or Carmy II) during each meeting to allow for an ample amount of student participation and general discussion. When asked to assess the success of the discussions, Rabbi Carmy commented, "They promote a livening of intellectual life, though they are not substitutes for more sustained intellectual application... I am pleased that I can help."

Lunchtime Verse

BY DAVID MIRSKY

As part of the ongoing Yeshiva College Arts Festival, students and faculty were treated to a lunchtime poetry reading by author Judith Baumel on Wednesday, March 25. The poetry reading and catered lunch took place at the Yeshiva College Writing Center, in a continuing effort to enhance the Writing Center's appeal as an intellectual hub within the college. Notwithstanding the scheduling of the event in the middle of the day, the attendance was impressive.

Judith Baumel is currently an associate professor of English at Adelphi University, and the head of its creative writing program. She served as director of the Poetry Society of America from 1985-1988. Her work has received much attention, with her first book, *The Weight of Numbers*, winning the Walt Whitman prize of the Academy of American Poets. Baumel also received a grant from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

After participants enjoyed the catered lunch, Baumel proceeded to introduce herself and list some of the works that she would read. Addressing any possible concerns about the appropriateness of the material she would read, Baumel recalled an incident at Vanderbilt University where she presented some risqué material in a reading at the chapel, irking some of the organizers of the event. She assured the audience that she would not step on any toes, but would rather connect to the crowd through her traditional Jewish upbringing and her more Jewish poems. The audience was amused at the stretching of the definition of "Jewish poems" when Baumel read a poem that celebrated the life of Bob Marley and his Rastafarian philosophy. Baumel explained Rastafarian philosophy as stemming from Jewish ideas, citing their concepts of Zion and eating only select animals. What made the poem interesting was her incorporation of famous words from many of Marley's songs.

Drawing on some biblical themes found throughout much of European legend, Baumel introduced us to the work of Patrizia Cavalli, an Italian poet whom she is translating in her new book. Responding to the problem of losing meaning in translation from one language to another, Baumel contended that part of translation is also interpretation, making it a daunting task. Some works read related to the death of one of Baumel's good friends. She explained that writing poetry about her friend was one of the ways that she dealt with the pain of her death.

Baumel then read some of her works that related to the life of her grandmother. Portraying her as a typical Jewish *Bubbe*, Baumel manages to combine instances of amusing idiosyncrasies with a deep and unwavering affection for her grandmother. In one instance, Baumel's grandmother had an allergic reaction to some aspirin, making her psychotic. Afterward, her grandmother was briefly committed to a drug rehabilitation center, Baumel wrote a poem that conjured up the incongruity of her sweet *Bubbe* offering sage advice to hardened drug addicts. In another poem portraying Baumel's admiration of her grandmother, she describes taking part in the weekly ritual of cleaning chickens in preparation for *Shabbat*, conveying the indelible impression her grandmother left on her.

Concluding the reading, Baumel read from some of her most recent works that are slated to appear in her new book *Province*. Many of the poems appearing in Baumel's 1996 book, *Now*, have been included in publications such as *The New Yorker*, *Agni*, *Harvard Magazine*, and the *New York Times Book Review*. Some of her works have been anthologized in collections of poetry, such as *A Year in Poetry*, *A Walk on the Wild Side*, and *Foster and Guthrie*.

The lunchtime reading provided its audience with a worthwhile glimpse into the depth of the creative process, and a chance to hear one of the foremost poets in America share her work.

Gelman Appointed Acting VP

Continued from page 1

extremely complex position that I am unsure I would even want."

Gelman is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where he earned his MSW, while his PH.D. he received at the Florence Heller Graduate School at Brandeis University. While on sabbatical in 1978, Gelman earned a Master of Law degree from Yale University, because he felt "it would aid my research and studies in the areas I was interested in."

Dr. Gelman has conducted research and published articles in topics related to social policy, liability issues in non-profit organizations, human service delivery systems, developmental disabilities, ethics, and child abuse. He is a Fellow of the American Association on Mental Retardation, and recently completed a three-year term on the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education. Gelman was also recently elected to the position of Vice-President of the National Association of Social Work Deans.

While not identifying himself as an Orthodox Jew, Gelman was raised in an Orthodox household, and he said that he

does not feel that his religious orientation will hinder him in performing his vice-presidential duties. "My qualifications are as an administrator, dean, scholar and academic in my areas of interest. I am not someone who will come in and begin to wear a yarmulke just because my title has changed. I am aware and respectful of the environment in which we exist, and I am very cognizant of that [environment]. I hope to have good relations with everyone in the university."

Gelman indicated that he expected his interim position to last from July 1998, until a permanent replacement would be found, hopefully by June 1999. "The search is a long and arduous process that every university goes through," he said. "On a daily basis, there are hundreds of universities searching everywhere for qualified academics and administrators. That is part of the reason why schools hire headhunters [executive search firms] to find candidates."

Gelman summed up his duties and aspirations by saying, "My overall goal? To make sure that the academic needs of our students and faculty are met."



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YCSC PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 1998

The Commentator asked the three YCSC Presidential Candidates to provide a written response to four questions:

- 1) What does it mean to be a student leader?
- 2) What qualifies you to be YCSC President?
- 3) What are your plans for next year's student council, if you are elected?
- 4) What is the one thing you would say to each student if you could speak with them individually?

Their Responses Are Unedited.

Presidential Campaigns Running Without Incident

BY JEFF TAUB AND ADAM MOSES

week, all seems to be running smoothly."

Elections for the student councils of Yeshiva College and Sy Syms School of Business - Uptown are scheduled for Thursday April 2. Balloting stations in the lounge of Morgenstern Residence Hall will be open to accommodate student voters from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Candidates will vie for positions on the YC Student Council Executive Board, SSSB Student Council, and senior and junior class leadership offices.

With the approach of elections, campaigning has begun in earnest. Colorful campaign posters seem to adorn every wall on campus. There is, however, order amidst this apparent promotional bedlam. The Canvassing Committee, headed by Mark Posner, is charged with enforcing regulations related to campaign practices. The size and number of signs are regulated by the Canvassing Committee. Additionally, candidates may not spend freely on their campaigns. The Canvassing Committee must assure that total expenditures for signs, promotional giveaways, and the like do not exceed \$175.

Thus far, candidates appear to be conforming with campaign regulations. Posner observed, "The Canvassing Committee is pleased with the general compliance of all candidates with regard to campaign regulations. Despite the abundance of offices being sought during this election

The initial stage of campaigning for a position on the Executive Board requires candidates to gather signatures from one-third of the body of students eligible to cast votes for the position sought. Candidates who succeed in obtaining the requisite signatures garner a position on the ballot.

Positions for the senior class include one president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer while the secretary and treasurer duties are combined as one position for the junior class. In addition to the SSSBSA vice president's duties to his own Executive Board, he also serves as the second vice president of the YCSC Executive Board - a post known as Vice President of Business Affairs.

Executive Board responsibilities include budget decisions, approving clubs, overseeing student activities, and arbitrating disputes. Each member of the Board takes on the following specific duties as well: The president oversees all general and specific actions of the Board, is the chairman of the Student Life Committee, is responsible for student parking, and, in recent years, has assumed responsibility for arranging the Chanukah concert. The secretary is responsible for the social and academic calendar as well as the Peer Tutoring program. The treasurer's duties include balancing the checkbook and assuring that YCSC funds are properly disbursed.

Dror Barber



1) It has always been my belief that a student leader is one who endeavors to best represent the student body by serving their needs and working to create an environment of which all may be proud. This individual must be ever careful to maintain an attitude characterized by an open door and an attentive ear.

2) It should come as no surprise that I have long prioritized the value of experience. As they become better acquainted with the Yeshiva system, students come to recognize the inestimable importance associated with a thorough understanding of the inner workings of the University and the way in which improvements can be brought about most effectively. It is perhaps for this reason more than any other that I have labored in such capacities as Chairman of the Orientation, Registrar, and Canvassing Committees, as well as serving as Freshman Class Vice President. Having organized successful events like Stomp, IMAX, and a Yankee game, I have become accustomed to the hard work and long hours that must be

invested in order to provide engaging and enjoyable student activities. Apart from this list of accomplishments, however, I think what will ultimately make all the difference is the possession of a genuine desire to work towards our common goal of a great university experience.

3) Among the many ideas that I hope to work on implementing next year are the following: A large-scale effort to revamp the Academic Advisement Center, with the introduction of advisors specializing in particular

majors; procuring the museum space, which will soon be available, for a 24-hour study hall, reference library, and computer center; making Food Services a top priority in order to improve the quality, quantity, and price of cafeteria food; shuttle service to airports for out-of-town students close to vacation time; creating a course evaluation booklet published by the students, for the students; wiring the dorms for Ethernet and an intra-college phone system; and improving communication between YCSC and the students through the Commentator, internet, and more frequent meetings. Finally, having already spent many an hour as Chairman of the Registrar Committee developing a system for on-line registration, I intend to monitor and secure the implementation of this program, already guaranteed by the administration for next January.

4) I would like to express my earnest pledge to serve the student populace in every way possible. At the same time, it is my belief that the possibilities are most infinite when a presidency such as the one I envision is firmly built upon the successes of the past and, most significantly, upon the continued participation and involvement of each and every student.

Daniel Drabkin



1) First and foremost, a student leader must possess the ability to deal with people. A student leader is not a leader of one group of people within the student body. Y.U. is an extremely diverse community, and the YCSC President who unites them all must be capable of dealing with every single person on a one-to-one basis. Our power as a student body is strongest when we work together. The Student Council president needs to make sure that we do just that.

2) For the past year I have worked on the student senate in order to maximize Y.U.'s academic potential. Working in this role, I have developed close relationships with people from all areas of Yeshiva University's diverse community. I've had the pleasure of working with people who disagree on issues, but agree on one primary directive: to make Y.U. a better place. I feel I can do more to unify Yeshiva University - working on the Senate and improving Academics is not enough. Student life is extremely important - only when our living conditions are optimal can we achieve our maximum academic potential. I am committed to continue working closely with all students in order to achieve our common goal.

3) a) Registration Problems Solved by Us. The solution to Y.U.'s registration dilemma

lies in the advancements of computer technology, in an organized internet-registration system. The talented computer-literate members of the student body among us are capable of making this work. I will bridge the gap between the administration and the student body to develop a relationship that benefits us all: an improved registration system for students, created by the students.

b) A Bigger, Newer, Quieter Study Area. The Y.U. Museum, located on the first floor of the library, is finding a new home for next semester. I will endeavor to work with administrative officials to set aside the area formerly occupied by the Museum for use as a study lounge. c) No More Scheduling Conflicts. There is hardly an evening, in any semester, without an important lecture on philosophy, Jewish history, or the natural sciences. It should not be acceptable to us that scheduling conflicts prevent students from attending these lectures. I will ensure that careful attention is paid to student schedules when planning these important events. d) Increased Computer Resources. Many students are annoyed by the financial expense and trouble that they incur in order to access the Internet. I will strive to solve these issues. I will look to upgrade the current internet access that Y.U. offers its students. We, as students, deserve the most up-to-date computer access available. e) Unity. Yeshiva University has always been a warm, united community. That is why I was heartbroken when students, having missed a final last semester due to a clerical error, received E's on their transcripts until they would take the final a month later. The administration overlooked the fact that students would be sending their transcripts to graduate schools. I endeavor to make sure that this type of miscommunication and inadvertent violation of student rights does not occur. It is my intent to work closely with all parties to ensure a close-knit, friendly, and warm Yeshiva University community.

4) The one thing I would tell a constituent is this: I assure you that I will exhaust every avenue in order to improve student life. My administration will live by one rule: UNIFY. I am committed to working with everyone. It is only when we work together, as one, that we will be able to establish the most comfortable student life possible.

Chanan Hoschander



1) A student leader is one who is aware of the concerns of the students and serves as their representative to the administration. It is incumbent upon any student leader to maintain contact with all of those that he is intended to represent. He must also initiate organization within the student body and lead that organized force in the effort to improve student life.

2) Through many conversations with concerned students, I have become aware of the issues which are occupying their minds. I feel that I will be able to continue speaking with students during my term and will therefore be equipped to serve their interests. My experience at the Commentator has provided me with a look at the inner workings of the student council and the administration. I think that I will be able to work within this system with the help of the rest of the concerned members of the student

body in order to accomplish lasting goals.

3) I intend to remind the administration that most of the top-tier universities boast ethernet connections in every dorm room. A task force will begin to be established the day following the elections in order to deal with the practical details relating to the implementation of the internet connections which I hope will be in place by the fall. I will push for increased dialogue and cooperation between YCSC and all of the Judaic Studies student organizations in order to facilitate the advancement of issues facing all students. I will address concerns that have been expressed by the Sephardic sector of the student body such as an investigation regarding the possibility of providing Kemach Yashan food products in the caf. There is a need for much improvement in the system of advisement and registration. I hope to establish advisement based on a student's major area of study. As soon as a student declares a major, a faculty member in that field will be assigned as his advisor. This will improve the quality of advisement and its pertinence to the student's academic goals. I expect that it will also serve to facilitate the registration process.

4) I want to express my firm belief that the outcome of this election has not yet been decided and that each student should exercise his ability to help his own cause by voting for the candidate who will best serve the interests of the student body.

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“Hold the Cheese!”

Zabib Takes TIME OUT For Students

BY AKIVA HERZFELD

Past midnight, during finals week of last semester, after other eateries had long since closed, a lone pizza store on Amsterdam Avenue kept its doors open. The pizzeria was Time Out, owned by Shalom Zabib, and it stayed open until 2 a.m., way past moneymaking hours. The reason why Time Out was open: to accommodate students who were cramming for finals. Last year, Shalom Zabib's son had kept Time Out open all night to accommodate students during finals, but this year, with his son away, Shalom could only manage to keep it open until 2 a.m.

Zabib's restaurant, Time Out, has had a long history of serving kosher food on campus, dating back to, at least, the 1940's. Judah the librarian, an individual familiar with the minutiae of YU trivia, recalled the wonderful milieu of the restaurant in the late 40's, early 50's. At that time, a Chinese chef, skilled in the culinary arts, served “absolutely stupendous take-out,” according to Judah.

After the demise of the Chinese chef, Sid and George moved in. According to another long time YUer (this one preferred to remain anonymous), Sid and George sponsored penurious bargains, such as “2 eggs on 2 rolls,” and “noodles and cheese to please.” This man, reminiscing, also recalled that Sid and George served “moiridikah” (incredible) chocolate milk and a fantastic drink called the “cherry-lime-rickey.”

After Sid and George came Mermelstein, and after Mermelstein came . . . and after him came Rollie and Asher, and after Rawley and Asher came Shalom. In the interim between when the Chinese cook served “stupendous take-out” and the present time, the restaurant has changed its name many times. Among other names, it has been called, “The Greasy Spoon,” “Tam Tov,” “Tov Meod,” “Cum-In-Es,” and “King David.”

Despite its long history, it is doubtful whether the store has ever been open past midnight, as it was during finals. Shalom, in an exclusive interview with *The Commentator*, explained why he has kept his store open during finals; his reason is truly remarkable.

“I can't just take, I have to give back,” Shalom declared. “This is a community pizza store, and I serve the people with all their needs. Even if the students just want to study in the store, they are welcome.”

Shalom went on to enumerate what he felt had been his many manifestations of community service. He said, “I am open Friday till 2 -- please don't come at 2: 30. I am open Saturday night, and I am open Thanksgiving and Christmas.” At these times, Shalom does not turn a profit, but he stays open for the community nevertheless. Shalom added, “Many come and cash checks; many come to me for mechanic . . . we try to do the best we can -- in two-and-a-half years, no poisoning!”

Shalom Zabib's promotional stunt, staying open all night for the students' benefit, is all the more remarkable because it is totally altruistic. The YU student only has limited options for food. With the Yum Yum Shoppe closed down, if the student is not eating dainty cafeteria delicacies, he can either go to Time Out, or wait 30 minutes for a hot-dog, while watching a repetitive video, in the *fleishig* restaurant next door. (The video is free!)

Even though Shalom Zabib does not provide a video to entertain his customers at Time Out, he did note that there are other forms for entertainment in his restaurant: the MTA students. These students provide Shalom with his biggest headaches and thrills. On his very first day of owning the restaurant, Shalom took a pepper shaker and turned it over to add a little spice to his pizza, but, instead of spilling out a little, the pepper shaker spilled the whole container full of pepper out onto his pizza. Someone had unscrewed the lid of the pepper container. As Shalom was soon to learn, this was a popular prank of the high school students. Referring to the students, he said, “I caught a few, and I warned them: if you don't want to eat, don't destroy the food. They did it again. I told the rabbi. So then they get suspended and they come crying to me. And then I have to speak to the rabbi again.”

There have also been cases of high school seniors having ketchup fights in Time Out, and other students have engaged in what Shalom, with a grin, euphemistically termed, “transferring ownership without payment.” In other words, stealing by certain students is a significant problem. In one episode, after a conscientious student returned from Israel, he went to Time Out and handed Shalom a 50-dollar bill. This student, in the past, had actively engaged in “transfers of ownership without payment,” and now he wished to pay for his past peccadilloes.

Through it all, Shalom maintains a happy smile. He said, “I love all the students and I am here to help. Money is not the only thing in life -- the lotto would help, but there is nothing that we're looking for.”

Before finishing speaking, however, Shalom added, “Please send this message to the MTA students: “Try to clean mess; although it is a restaurant, if they have to rush to class it is acceptable -- if they have to rush to video room, it's not.”

With his gentle-hearted and warm nature, Shalom has encouraged students to eat at Time Out. However, for many college students at YU, it is only the food of a restaurant, not the ambiance, that is important. Opinion on the quality of Time Out food varied from student to student, as some thought it good, others not so good. Yet for one student, it is neither the food, nor the ambiance that leads him to buy at Time Out. He said, “I go to Time Out to see Wanda (the waitress). She is number one in my book.”

Books, Music, Theatre, Restaurants, Cinema

CULTURE

MOVIE REVIEW

U.S. MARSHALS

US Marshalls

Tommy Lee Jones, Wesley Snipes and Robert Downey Jr.

BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

After five years, the cop who always gets his man has returned in a spin-off (not sequel) to 1993's *The Fugitive*. In *U.S. Marshals*, Tommy Lee Jones is a one-man army hunting a fugitive who this time around is played by Wesley Snipes. Lacking director Andrew Davis, and action hero icon, Harrison Ford, the film is just as riveting as the original but without the heart and soul which made *The Fugitive* the hit that it was.

The film begins in the present day; Tommy Lee Jones is again hunting down criminals as Chief Deputy Marshal Sam Gerard, and is assisted by his crew, notably his second in command Deputy Cosmo Renfro (Joe Pantoliano), who is reprising his role from *The Fugitive*. On what should be a routine criminal transport via airplane reminiscent of *Con Air*, Jones suddenly finds himself in the midst of the most riveting plane crashes ever seen on film. While Jones attempts to ensure that the prisoners are accounted for, Mark Sheridan, played by Wesley Snipes, is mysteriously absent. Snipes commences the familiar quest to clear his name, evading the bad guys and the law at the same time.

Jones, who is addicted to the thrill of hunting soon begins his hunt for Snipes, who is accused of murdering two government agents. Because this case is government related, agent John Royce (Robert Downey Jr.), is assigned to "assist" him, which in this case, means keeping tabs on the operation and acting as a loose canon, incongruent with Jones' strict operational method. The chase starts in the South in the bayou region of Tennessee, which provides an interesting location for a hunt. As Jones learns more about Sheridan's background, the chase shifts to New York City and the United Nations. The audience learns about a tale of foreign conspiracy and secret-selling, in which Snipes is seemingly involved. Plot twists, along with action, chase, and suspense sequences are sewn through each scene with ease, as Snipes must escape his hunters, while simultaneously, figure out who was responsible for framing him.

The action sequences are all well executed, and the editing of each suspense scene is respectable and provides superb pacing for this thriller. Director Stuart Baird, whose only other film was

Executive Decision, deserves much credit for his work on creating this solid thriller. Mr. Baird, an editing veteran of the *Lethal Weapon*, *Die-Hard*, *Superman* and other action flicks is an authority when it comes to putting these films together. Tommy Lee Jones, with recognition to a script that paints him in all his eccentric mannerisms, is perfect in his role as Gerard. It should be noted that Jones' bravado and militant charisma are true reminders that he is one of the few remaining Hollywood "tough guys." Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson and Lee Marvin are too old to take on these iconic roles and there aren't many actors who have this consistent image from picture to picture. Therefore, his well developed persona needs much time in the film to develop itself, as his introduction was in the previous film. *U.S. Marshals* begins and ends with a nonstop "Tommy Lee Jones routine" that is as integral to the movie as the plot itself.

The remaining cast deserves little praise. Wesley Snipes, who doesn't even need to act much in a film such as this, doesn't hold the mass appeal that a star like Harrison Ford has. Robert Downey Jr. adds nothing interesting to his character, and plays his role like any generic government agent, with bland malice and mundane antagonism. Though Joey Pantoliano is welcoming relief, to a poor supporting actor, in reprising his role as Jones' crony, the inclusion of an entire group of sidekicks which is reminiscent of *Twister* is superfluous; their purpose is to add a superficial level of humor or to act as the token body-bag fillers.

The story itself is obviously generic, as it is a by-product of its predecessor. However, the new locations as well as the creative orchestration of the perpetual action, force away direct comparison to *The Fugitive*. The film does lack a segment for emotional release. There is no part in the film that lets Snipes have any chance to reflect on what's happening to him, because this particular film needs to keep moving and establishes a strict pace. The emotional music isn't even there as Jerry Goldsmith only scored for the action sequences, much unlike James Newton Howard's suspenseful and emotionally driven score to *The Fugitive*. Nevertheless, the film with its tiny flaws is still worthwhile because of Jones' over-the-top performance and its perfect pace.

MOVIE REVIEW



HE WAS BORN TO RUN.

JOHN TRAVOLTA
EMMA THOMPSON

A FILM BY MIKE NICHOLS

PRIMARY COLORS

Primary Colors

John Travolta, Emma Thompson, Adrian Lester and Kathy Bates

BY YAIR OPPENHEIM

Once every few years, there comes a film with miraculous precision in hitting the proverbial nail on the head; one that raises the ever-present question of whether art imitates life or conversely life imitates art. If audiences thought that *Wag The Dog* seemed a bit familiar, then *Primary Colors*, with all of its noticeable Clintonisms, should give them a jolt like they've never seen.

The film begins with Governor Jack Stanton (John Travolta), and his wife Susan Stanton (Emma Thompson), on the battleground with the intent on winning the New Hampshire primaries in order to catapult into the office of the Presidency. Debate after debate ensues, and Governor Stanton wins with ease. However, being the scatterbrained individual that he is, his goal demands the work of a campaign manager, one who is level-headed enough to keep the Governor on track. Who fills this position? None other than Henry Burton, played by relative newcomer Adrian Lester, the politically correct choice, as he is African-American. In addition to Burton, an entire team is picked to help achieve the Governor's goals. Libby Holden, played by Kathy Bates, becomes the crisis/scandal deflector, known in the film as the "dustbuster." Daisy Green (Maura Tierney), acts as the Governor's media consultant. Last, but not least, is Richard Jemmons, played by Billy Bob Thornton, the Governor's keen political strategist with the eyes of a watchdog. The film depicts their teamwork in getting the Governor to become the President of the United States.

The film is actually introduced as a comedy - an offbeat depiction of what goes on behind the closed doors of a campaign. With its quirkiness still residing within the boundaries of normality, the comedy still manages to retain dignity in spite of the topic at hand. However, once Jack Stanton becomes a heavyweight candidate, the film takes a more serious turn. Governor Stanton and his crew must soon deal with scandals leaking from every crack, along with difficult moral decisions that come into play. When mudslinging becomes a political asset to one party, it becomes fair game and develops into a weapon for the other side as well.

First up is an alleged affair with a hairdresser, which is quickly shot down by the

proud campaign team because of its unfeasibility. Next comes the alleged baby the Governor has fathered with an underage black girl. The deeper the dig the more serious and truthful the allegations become. Nobody is safe as the dirt flies in every direction. The film soon clarifies its focus; is the Governor "the real thing?" While answering this question the movie poses a much broader one: what matters more, the man, or what he believes in?

Primary Colors is superb at taking viewers into a world they have never really seen - the backdrop of an election. It does so with candor and grace. Elaine May's script was full to the brim with juicy monologues for the characters, and Mike Nichols' direction should be applauded in what is always labeled as a touchy subject, the comedy-drama. In this case, he is somehow able to balance the two as successfully as he has done in the past (*The Graduate*, *Working Girl*, and *Silkwood*).

The film is also a phenomenal showpiece of acting. John Travolta, though not performing up to his full potential, clearly does have what is undoubtedly his perfect role; his note for note imitation of President Clinton is jaw-dropping. He manages to display the mannerisms, the look, and the smooth talking that Clinton is associated with in such a way, that one may wonder which is the real McCoy. Emma Thompson, pulls off a fine performance as Susan Stanton, yet is overshadowed by Travolta. However, the real gems here are the supporting cast. Adrian Lester and Kathy Bates steal the screen at every moment they get to speak their mind. It seems appropriate to see the movie through Lester's eyes, as he is the only voice of reason. His persona balances what would be an otherwise eccentric film of oddball characters (though normal with respect to the real world). Kathy Bates also gives what is one of the finest performances of her career, gleefully reminiscent of her outlandishness in *Misery*. My only reservation was the accuracy of Clinton's portrayal. Governor Stanton is written in simply as a smooth-talking, quick-witted philanderer, but not as smart. Though he may win the heart of the people, the film portrays him as merely a boy who makes other people clean up after his messes, while they applaud his victories. I wonder how true that is.

That aside, the film is a true success.

Books, Music, Theatre, Restaurants, Cinema

CULTURE

BOOK REVIEW

The State of Israel, a History

By Martin Gilbert

BY YITZCHAK INSELMINN

At first glance Martin Gilbert's "Israel, a History" seems like a quite promising read. At a time when Israel is experiencing both a crucial anniversary and a crucial historical period, the release of a major historical work covering its existence is a timely and significant event. The cover illustrated with photos of major figures in Israeli history and reading simply "Israel, a History" suggests a monumental work that will be able to say some very important things about the State of Israel.

Instead "Israel, a History" is a strange lifeless cross between a mishmash of encyclopedic date and place recitations and a coffee table book. Gilbert piles on page after page and chapter after chapter of almost random recitations of historical incidents combined with biographical quotes from a few selected individuals

to create one incoherent whole. His focus in this retelling is often on the incredibly minor and unimportant while neglecting other major events that were occurring at the same time. There is little original or innovative to be found here and what Gilbert has really done is create an encyclopedia entry on the State of Israel that runs on for hundreds of pages.

The prose style is tired like a bored professor delivering a lecture for the hundredth time whose content he remembers but whose order and meaning escapes him. Gilbert's prose style tends to run to the flat and uninspired and this only makes the basic flaws of the book far more noticeable and exhausting. It is too annoying, pointless and tiring to be read by the casual reader and offers little of interest to the experienced amateur or professional historian already familiar with the history Gilbert retells.

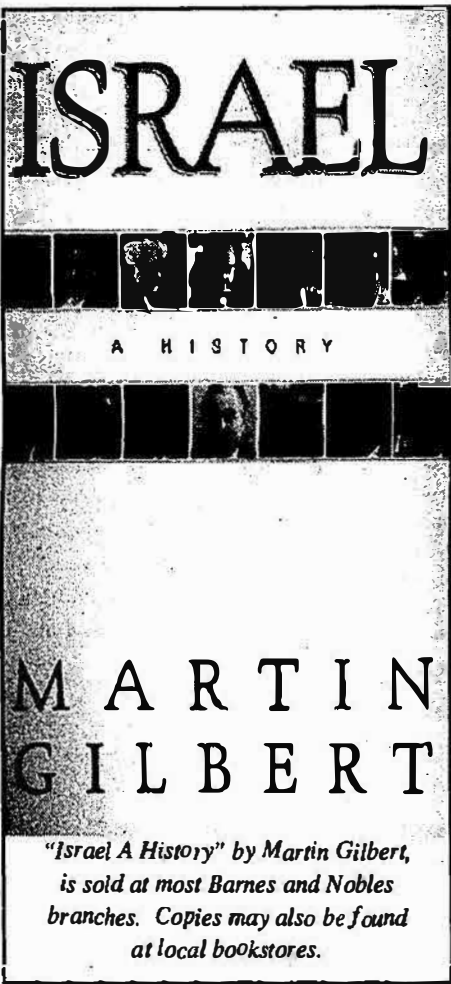
Gilbert does have an excellent reputation as a historian but "Israel, a History" is a work too fundamentally flawed in basic ways to add any credit to his "resume."

Former Israel Prime Minister Shimon Peres is acknowledged by the author as having played a significant role in the creation of "Israel, a History," which may help to explain

at least in part why significant figures on the right are almost completely ignored. Zev Jabotinsky is nearly ignored and is only mentioned briefly and almost in passing. The Irgun is only recalled as a recitation of terrorist acts and Gilbert doesn't seem remotely interested in looking at its internal life or that of the Stern Gang. Figures on the pre-statehood right tend to be portrayed as dangerous violence prone lunatics uninterested in anything but killing innocent British and Arab civilians. Gilbert not only forgoes

looking beyond the usual party line but avoids any examination of these groups and avoids historical mention of them that doesn't portray them as unambiguously bad.

Gilbert's fixation on certain Israeli historical figures dominate major portions of the book and quotations from their biographies can run on for as long as a page. "Israel, a History" is not so much an exploration as a retreat from exploration. It has nothing to offer and no real appeal beyond the clustered range of statements treated as facts that can be found in any encyclopedia entry. As a book it makes a good present to someone who you know won't read it as it has a quite impressive cover. In the case that you have received it as a present it makes a good paperweight, doorstop or can serve well in any role in which its physical attributes are more important than its content.



BOOK REVIEW

Mid-life Reunions, Two Guys from Verona

By James Kaplan

BY YITZCHAK INSELMINN

"Two Guys from Verona" is not, as one might expect from the title, a slacker or Ebonics translation of Shakespeare's "Two Gentlemen from Verona." Instead, it is the story of two old High School pals from Verona, New Jersey dealing with life on the eve of their 25th high school reunion and the eve of the new millennium.

Set in 1999, the novel's unusual choice of an almost science fiction setting is presumably meant to coincide with the way time has rushed by the novel's two aging protagonists, Will Weiss and Joel Gold. Instead, it mainly serves to distract the reader from the plot with toned-down versions of the mild neo-futuristic satires such as "Back to the Future II" and Conan O'Brien's "In the Year 2000 sketches," while offering little that contributes to the story itself.

The upscale New Jersey setting of the Two Guys is not light years apart from the upscale Connecticut setting of the recent movie "The Ice Storm," and its narrative depicting the onrush of the future upsetting the comfortable

world of the dreamers and the doers follows much of the same plot as well. However, this novel differs: not in its sentimental hipness or its direct visual language (although both help this novel stand out from the slowly-growing pack of similarly themed Baby Boomer elegies), but rather in its commitment to memory that is as powerful and as meaningful as that of "Slaves in the Family."

From Will's bourgeois anxieties to Joel's counter-social existence, they are united not only by a common past, but also by a common anxiety of the future. Their existence, which contrasts in Will's collapsing marriage and incoming mid-life crisis and Joel's unreal anti-social existence, only serves to heighten the forces of memory and change which present them with the human choice that we must make. As a species which has developed a history, a progression of events

whose forwards motion only contrasts with cyclical natural events, must either accept change through adaptation or reject it through madness.



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CULTURE

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An Evenin' Peakin' at The Beacon

The Allman Brothers in Concert

BY ELI GUROCK

A mushroom is a normal food common to most people as a pizza topping or a part of a salad, but on March 22, to the people at New York's Beacon Theater, mushrooms had different significance. The mushroom, or 'shroom, symbolized a more happy, peaceful, and chill society... precisely why The Allman Brothers Band have used the 'shroom as a trademark for close to thirty years. On this, their last show of fifteen at the New York landmark, the stage was accompanied by four tremendous silk tapestries of 'shrooms in different psychedelic colors.

Nevertheless, the crowd did not need the still life banners of peace and happiness, as the show itself provided these needs in abundance. Coming on fifteen minutes after they were announced, the Allman Brothers blew the crowd into eternal happiness with "In memory of Elizabeth Reed." The song, a long time show-starting staple, was played in front of a large screen which featured different psychedelic images which added to the total effect of the show. As the first set progressed, the band played more and more towards the crowd. When they received less than favorable cheers from the crowd after one song ended without a significant jam session, they responded with a very long rendition of the fan favorite "Blue Skies." The jam part alone lasted at least twenty minutes, with the entire crowd on their feet dancing and swaying to the guitars. A random person, who seemed as though he had been enjoying a certain type of vegetation, said, "That was like I just died, man, and that song brought me back." How true. The image of an eagle soaring over a blue sky which was projected on the back screen contrasted with the psychedelic atmosphere the band was trying to create, but no one seemed to mind; the music was too good to think of anything else.

As the first set progressed, the background screen flashed images of the magical mushrooms with the bands name, along with different tie dyed and multicolored images. These images were always kept in time with the music and the multicolored laser lights which were flashing all over the place. In the midst of it was Dickey Betts and Jack Pearson squaring off, feuding with their guitars. After one played a killer solo, the other had to play an equal or even better solo to match - truly a spectacular sight. Greg Allman, the only Allman brother left, could have performed better with his jams on the keyboard, however the fifteen previous shows obviously left him tired. Fortunately, what he lacked in terms of jamming, he made up for with his soul, which is the base of The

Allman Brothers Band.

After a short intermission, the second set opened with a Betty Boop cartoon. The highly resplendent cartoon, was followed by a five song acoustic set featuring just Dickey, Jack, and basist Oteil Burbridge. They played a couple of blues covers including a fabulous rendition of an Ella Fitzgerald classic. Greg then returned to the stage, grabbed a guitar and sang a wonderful acoustic "Melissa" with his band brothers. The slow set did not exactly wow the crowd until this point, but "Melissa" got the entire crowd on their feet. After "Melissa," the full band returned and played an old Otis Redding song and their jamming continued to equal the quality of the first set.

During the third set, the band gave a

tribute to famous musicians who have passed on. Amidst the song "Crazy Love," the screen behind the band carried pictures of Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Greg's brother and original Allman Brother Band, member Duane Allman, and former Grateful Dead lead singer Jerry Garcia. While Duane's picture got a large reaction from the crowd, the reaction to the picture of Jerry almost drowned out the playing of the band.

The rest of the set was composed of mostly early songs by the band. The set was capped with an insane jam session to "Revival." The fifty minute long session included a half hour drum solo by drummers Butch Trucks, Jaimoe, and Marc Quinones. The band then returned and finished the set, after which the band returned for only one

encore which was quite disappointing. The encore lacked intensity, was too short (as they only played one song), and featured a virtually unknown song. The encore was the only low point of the show.

One of the most endearing aspects of the Allman's show was the crowd, full of Peachheads. Although the show was in the heart of Manhattan, the crowd was certainly atypical of New Yorkers. Everyone was incredibly nice, and people were having conversations with every person they bumped into. No one was being pushed or shoved the way people usually are during rock concerts. Everyone made sure that everyone else was having a good time. This all added up to, really a great, great show.

Service Announcements

COMMUNITY

ANNUAL COMPETITION FOR FULBRIGHT GRANTS

Contact: U.S. Student Program
(212) 984-5327

The United States Information Agency (USIA), the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board and the Institute of International Education (IIE) announce the official opening on May 1, 1998 of the 1999-2000 competition for Fulbright Grants for graduate study or research abroad in academic fields and for professional training in the creative and performing arts.

For all grants, applicants must be U.S. citizens at the time of application and hold a bachelor's degree or its equivalent by the beginning date of the grant. Creative and performing artists are not required to have a bachelor's degree, but they must have four years of relevant training or study. Candidates in medicine must have an M.D. or equivalent (e.g., D.D.S., O.D., etc.) at the time of applications.

All applicants are required to have sufficient proficiency in the language of the host country to carry out their proposed study or research.

Fulbright Full Grants provide round-trip international travel, maintenance for the duration of the grant, a research allowance, and tuition waivers, if applicable. Fulbright Travel Grants provide round-trip travel to the country where the student will pursue study or research. They are intended to supplement maintenance awards from other sources that do not provide funds for international travel or an applicant's personal funds. All grants include supplemental health and accident insurance.

Complete program and application information is contained in the brochure, "Fulbright and related grants for graduate study and research abroad, 1999-2000" and on IIE's website.

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For further information write or call Dr. Margaret B. Pigott, 322 Wilson Hall, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan 48309-4401. Telephone (248) 652-3405 or (248) 370-4131; Fax: (248) 650-9107; E-mail: , www.Oakland.edu/oxford or Dr. Edward J. Wolff, Department of English, University of Detroit Mercy, P.O. Box 19900, Detroit, Michigan 48219-0900. Telephone (313) 993-1082 or (248) 652-3405; Fax: (248) 650-9107.

MUSEUM OF HERITAGE THURSDAY EVENING SERIES

To illustrate the richness and complexity of Jewish life in the 20th Century, the Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, has scheduled a series of thought-provoking evening events in its landmark new facility in Lower Manhattan. The "Thursday Evening Series" will kick off on Thursday, March 19th, and continue throughout the year.

Building upon the Museum's mission to educate people of all ages and backgrounds, the events will offer an engaging public dialogue on a broad range of issues from ancient archeology to 20th Century literature. The majority of the events will begin at 6:00pm and take place in the Museum's 3rd floor Overlook Gallery which commands stunning vistas of Lower Manhattan, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and New York Harbor.

March 26th, 8:00pm, at The Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd Street. *Metamorphosis: A New Kafka*

A panel of pre-eminent writers, including E.L. Doctorow and Susan Sontag and actor Christopher Plummer, will re-examine the work of groundbreaking Czech-Jewish author Franz Kafka. Presented in conjunction with the PEN American Center. \$10 general admission at the Town Hall box office or TicketMaster. For more info call (212) 334-1660.

April 23 - Yom Hashoah, the Day of Holocaust Remembrance. Survivors, their children and Museum artifact donors will be available to recount their diverse and moving stories.

May 7 - A lecture and book launching reception in honor of the publication of Arthur Hertzberg's latest book, *Jews: The Essence and Character of a People*. Currently the Bronfman Visiting Professor of the Humanities at New York University, Rabbi Hertzberg has authored over a dozen books on the subjects of Zionism and Jewish identity, many of which have long been regarded as classics.

Books, Music, Theatre, Restaurants, Cinema

CULTURE

Know Your Alternatives
The Grammy Edition

BY DAVID RAPPAPORT

Spring break is almost here and the tension can be felt everywhere on campus. Yes my friends, springtime is for lovers and it is quite evident that Yeshiva University is no exception. The kind Commentator staff has asked me to review the Grammy's so without further ado.

One word, Dull. Full of old performers patting themselves on the back the Grammy's have become a disgrace. When John Fogerty wins in the best rock album category you know there are serious issues. No insult intended, however, Mr. Fogerty's material is a far cry from his work in the seminal group Credence Clearwater Revival. Aside from this, the commercial breaks were too long and the performances by musical guests were too diverse to keep anyone's attention for longer than 5 minutes. Additionally, choosing not to televise Best Alternative Album was the perfect way to alienate young music listeners. Way to go NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences). The Grammy's suck. Every year. No exceptions. Here are some of the winners. Note that I refrained from listing all 92 categories because I highly doubt that any of you really give a ?!#*** about best album notes and otherwise.

Category 1

Record Of The Year

Sunny Came Home

Shawn Colvin

John Leventhal, producer

Track from: A Few Small Repairs

[Columbia Records]

Shawn Colvin gave the best speech of the night only because she managed to be upstaged by an extremely wasted Old Dirty Bastard from the Wu Tang Clan. Good job Old Dirty because Shawn Colvin is a slapper and deserves to be shot. The winner for this category wasn't even nominated. The Verve's Bitter Sweet Symphony was the most played record of the year internationally and critically it blew Ms. Colvin away. NARAS really botched this one up.

Category 2

Album Of The Year

Time Out Of Mind

Bob Dylan

Daniel Lanois, producer

[Columbia Records]

Robert Zimmerman didn't win for Blood on the Tracks so here he was finally getting his due. I found it extremely unfortunate that it was at the expense of Radiohead. Critics worldwide had a hard time with this one. In the end, the Academy chose the noble way out.

Category 3

Song Of The Year

Sunny Came Home

Shawn Colvin & John Leventhal, song-

writers (Shawn Colvin)

Track from: A Few Small Repairs

[Columbia Records]

AGGGHHH! Bad call.

Category 4

Best New Artist

Paula Cole

There were so many others deserving. Belle and Sebastian most notably but no one could care less. This is the land of the free to buy crap records if you want to.

Category 6

Best Male Pop Vocal Performance

Candle In The Wind 1997

Elton John

[Rocket Records]

This was extremely embarrassing. Sentimentality should not be a factor in rewarding artists.

Category 7

Best Pop Performance By A Duo Or

Group With Vocal

Virtual Insanity

Jamiroquai

Track from: Travelling Without Moving

[The WORK Group]

A white guy who wishes he was Stevie wonder. Not going to happen. Not now. Not later. Please go buy Stevie Wonder's first record.

Category 11

Best Pop Album

Hourglass

James Taylor

Frank Filippetti & James Taylor, produc-

ers

[Columbia Records]

Not a chance in hell. Since when is easy listening pop? Remember when the Beatles were pop? This is not pop.

Category 13

Best Female Rock Vocal Performance

Criminal

Fiona Apple

Track from: Tidal

[The WORK Group]

No matter how much I hate her as a person, she was really the only choice. Uhh. I just don't know.

Category 15

Best Rock Performance By A Duo Or

Group With Vocal

One Headlight

The Wallflowers

Track from: Bringing Down The Horse

[Interscope Records]

Radiohead.

Category 16

Best Hard Rock Performance

The End Is The Beginning Is The End

The Smashing Pumpkins

Track from: Batman & Robin - Music

From & Inspired By The Motion Picture

(Various Artists)

[Warner Bros./Sunset Records]

Radiohead.

Category 19

Best Rock Song

One Headlight

Jakob Dylan, songwriter (The

Wallflowers)

Track from: Bringing Down The Horse

[Interscope Records]

The Karma police should arrest Mr. Dylan

Jr.

Category 20

Best Rock Album

Blue Moon Swamp

John Fogerty

John Fogerty, producer

[Warner Bros. Records]

The new requirement to win a Grammy is a minimum age of 50. How rock and roll.

Category 21

Best Alternative Music Performance

OK Computer

Radiohead

[Capitol Records]

Alternative to what?

Category 22

Best Female R&B Vocal Performance

On & On

Erykah Badu

Track from: Baduizm

[Kedar/Universal Records]

Yes. This was extremely well deserved.

What a voice!

Category 26

Best R&B Album

Baduizm

Erykah Badu

[Kedar/Universal Records]

Again!

Category 29

Best Rap Album

No Way Out

Puff Daddy & The Family

Sean "Puffy" Combs & Stevie J., pro-

ducers

[Bad Boy Records]

They should rename this the Best Choice of Samples award.

The next slew of awards was for country music. This is the North. I'm making the assumption that none of you could give **** (hoot) about country music.

Category 65

Best Spoken Comedy Album

Roll With The New

Chris Rock

[DreamWorks Records]

Excellent. Mr. Rock is perhaps the funniest man in America today.

Category 77

Producer Of The Year, Non-Classical

Babyface

• Az Yet (Az Yet) (A)

• The Day (Babyface) (A)

• Girl In The Life Magazine (Boyz II

Men) (T)

• Never (Boyz II Men) (T)

• A Song For Mama (Boyz II Men) (T)

• Soul Food - Soundtrack (Various

Artists) (A)

• This Is For The Lover In You

(Babyface) (S)

He deserves it. No one cranks out the hits like Babyface. He is the modern day Phil Spector

Category 92

Best Long Form Music Video

Jagged Little Pill, Live

Alanis Morissette

Alanis Morissette & Steve Purcell,

video directors; Glen Ballard, David

May, Alanis Morissette & Steve Purcell,

video producers

[Warner/Reprise Video/Maverick]

And so ended another year of inanity at the Grammy's. It was boring from start to finish. If this is contemporary music then shoot me. I was nothing short of insulted.

The Back Fence

BY SENYA MALER

Without much of a history, the Back Fence does its best to stay true to the vintage tradition of the village, despite not being as well frequented as its more established neighbors. The interior, hinting slightly at a Western theme, does look out of place but is not without its charm. The Back Fence is definitely much more informal and laid back than other village night spots, sometimes resembling a bar scene more than that of the somewhat classier ambiance found at the more tourist oriented places like Café Wha? and the Bitter End. An immediate indication of the relaxed attitude, are the peanut shells that cover the floor.

It is custom at the Back Fence to take long sips of Honey Brown Ale from your very generously sized mug, while dipping your hand into the basket of peanuts at your table, and throwing their shells on the floor. Strange at first, this simple act is actually more liberating than one could ever imagine. The drink menu, fitting its surroundings, is limited but enough to cover most tastes. However, a note to the more rebellious of the Stern contingent, "lowcal" non-alcoholic strawberry daiquiri with no ice and one of those cute little umbrellas was not an option.

A negative of this urban saloon is that its mood, always the most crucial ingredient in any establishment of this sort, is completely at the mercy of the visiting band. My last visit was a perfect example of this phenomenon. The Back Fence hosts two back-to-back shows every night of the

week featuring such notable, local talent as "The Wallbangers" and "Spare Parts" who frequent most village clubs. The first show featured the unknown, three-man blues-rock band, "Indian Summer," followed by the second set featuring Back Fence regulars, Bob and Norm, a two man acoustical jam. The first set, aside from a cover of the Hendrix classic "The Wind Cries Mary," left much to be desired. Within ten minutes the mood hit a low point and one couldn't help but notice things like the poor acoustics, the noise making it impossible to maintain any conversation, and a general lack of warmth and ambiance. As I was getting ready to ask for my check, the second set began.

The transformation was no less than 180 degrees. After a successful attempt to interact with the crowd, something "Indian Summer" couldn't do, Bob and Norm went right into a ten minute Beatles montage, followed by two excellent renditions Zeppelin songs, and the Rolling Stones ballad, "Angie." This steady stream of soulful, mellow, K rock pumped new life into the crowd and made the rest of the night at the Back Fence something I would definitely recommend.

Bottom line: call first to see whose playing, ask about Bob and Norm, and hope you get lucky. Usually no or low cover and drink minimum.

THE BACK FENCE

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LETTERS

To the Editor

Forsaking Shalom for Emet

To the Editor:

While I have very great respect for Rabbi Tendler, I am very troubled by some of the points he makes in his opinion piece entitled, "When Everything Else Fails, Tell the Truth." Rabbi Tendler's statement that "there is no difference between the ideology/theology of the conservative and reform movements" is clearly an oversimplification of the historical origins of these two very distinct movements. However, what troubles me most about the article is Rabbi Tendler's insensitive dismissal of Reform and Conservative Jews as "irrevocably removed from the congregation of Israel." It can only be because Rabbi Tendler has written them off that he is willing to completely disregard the damage and pain such statements cause to Reform and Conservative Jews. As one non-Orthodox member of Yeshiva College faculty reported to another after reading the article, "So I guess I am not Jewish".

What then, has been accomplished by writing this article? Rabbi Tendler has (further) alienated the non-Orthodox reader, he has only heightened the intolerance of some segments of the student body, and he has generally deepened the chasm within American Jewry. One need only look for proof at the infamous proclamation of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. Whether justified or not, this proclamation caused great ill will and created an uproar purely because its authors did not

measure their words.

In the end, their proclamation was a catalyst, not for deeper religious commitment, but for increased resentment of our Orthodox community, which may be exactly what they wanted. I can only surmise that the point of Rabbi Tendler's article was to provoke controversy and further divide the Jewish people.

The Commentator is not a mere inter-office memo. Rather, it is sent to all Yeshiva College Alumni, and now reaches anyone with a modem. As any student of the interplay between language and self-confidence knows, the more starkly dogmatic the language, the more it displays an underlying insecurity. If Rabbi Tendler is trying to increase our understanding of our communal vulnerability, why must he launch a public offensive, rather than shore up our internal defensive structure?

Rabbi Tendler's article does not seem to value the importance of Jewish unity. His title asks that we "... tell the truth." The truth is that there is a value to Jewish unity. The truth is that we can not totally dismiss "shalom" (peace) for the sake of "emet" (truth). As Rabbi Tendler quotes from the book of Zacharia, real justice is only that which is attained through a balance of emet and shalom. Though he invokes the need for such a balance, the substance of his piece undermines the very tenuous balance he claims to be seeking.

Yonatan Bendheim
YC'99

Yeshiva University Represents the Future

To the Editor:

As a member of the Board of Trustees of Yeshiva University, I recently had the pleasure to view the facilities of the buildings and visit with some of the Deans, faculty and students, through the courtesy of Dr. Herbert Dobrinsky, Vice President for University Affairs, who escorted me throughout the day.

I must say it was a very positive and inspiring experience.

I was tremendously impressed with the intellectual caliber of the faculty and students I met, and was very pleased to observe the care with which the physical plant is being treated. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to sit in on a class and to have lunch with some undergraduate and graduate students. They very articu-

lately expressed the satisfaction they took in their studies and spoke highly of the education YU was offering them, preparing them for their future plans.

I was immensely moved when I found myself in the Beit Midrash amidst the hum of students in two-by-two discourse/learning of Talmud. I felt that here, in this room was the future: the future of orthodox Jewish learning, the future of informed civil discourse, and the future of intellectual leadership.

I firmly believe that from this excellent institution will come great Jewish leaders, thinkers and strong citizens.

I am so proud to be, albeit in a small way, a part of this.

Sincerely yours,
E. Billi Ivry

Defining the Scientific Revolution

To the Editor:

I enjoyed the lively profile written about me, but I must correct one inaccuracy. I have never said, nor do I believe, that "the Scientific Revolution is Evil." What I do say

is that the consequences of the Scientific Revolution are at best ambiguous and that "Progress" comes with a hefty price tag.

Sincerely,
Manfred Weidhorn

In Defense of Rabbi Lamm

To the Editor:

The Commentator has printed two lengthy defenses of Rabbi Svei's attack on Rabbi Lamm. Non-students, who used the letters to the editor as an opportunity to criticize Modern Orthodoxy, wrote both. It is unfortunate that this incident has become reduced to merely one aspect of an assumed struggle for dominance in the Orthodox community.

I heard the talk by Rabbi Lamm and have carefully read the printed version. He quoted the Talmud (Shabbat 33B) which described what occurred when Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his son left the cave where they had studied Torah while fleeing from the Roman authorities. The command to return to the cave was issued by a divine voice. Rabbi Lamm used this story to promote a vision of Orthodoxy that interacts with the outside world. Only one who

assumed that Rabbi Lamm is an enemy of the "Yeshiva world" could read in his choice of image, which was that of the Talmudic story, an attack on those who learn Torah full time.

Rabbeinu Yonah describes an individual who, while personally observant, demonstrates a hatred for fully committed Jews. He considers such a person a hater of Hashem as well. Assigning such an epithet to a live person would require knowledge of that individual's inner feelings and motivations. One who has publicly attacked Rabbi Lamm, Yeshiva University and its philosophy is hardly the right choice to make that judgment. The decision to have Rabbi Lamm sit on the dais at the Siyum Hashas indicates that the majority of Roshei Yeshiva did not share this misreading of his speech.

Sincerely yours,
Rabbi Yosef Blau

The Commentator

welcomes letters from its readers.

Letters must include the writer's name,

address and telephone number.

Students should also include
school enrolled in and graduation date.

The Commentator reserves the right
to edit all letters for syntax, content, and size.

The Commentator

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New York, NY 10033

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YU Hosts Red Sarachek High School Tournament

*YULA Victorious Over MTA
In Championship Game*

BY MICHA PORAT

The annual Red Sarachek Tournament took place from Thursday March 26th through Monday, the 30th. One of the major purposes of the tournament is to allow prospective Yeshiva University students to see the campus and witness what it's like to be a student here. The tournament accomplished just that as sixteen teams from all over the United States and Canada competed. The tournament, as it has done in years past, produced much excitement on campus, as the attendance levels were high. Yeshiva students from out of town obtained a rare opportunity to watch their home teams play basketball. The students took full advantage of this fact. This was particularly true with the teams from Miami, Los Angeles, and Toronto as many fans from these areas contributed extremely enthusiastic fan support.

Many of the games were very intense as several games were decided by four points or less. Yeshiva University basketball head coach John Halpert, who assisted John Bandler in running the entire event, remarked, "The games were generally very competitive. The semifinal games and even some of the first round games including Ida Crown, were very exciting to watch." John Bandler, who in

addition to running the event also coached the MTA basketball team stated, "This tournament was very interesting. For many of the players on several teams, it was their second year playing in the tournament. They gained a certain amount of maturity, which was especially true with the programs from both Cleveland and Detroit."

The championship game matched YULA, the number 1 seed who had defeated their previous opponents by no less than twenty points, against tournament host MTA. The local high school was the number six seed in the tournament as they overcame major obstacles in defeating the numbers two and four seeds, Flatbush and Torah Academy of Baltimore. It was a capacity crowd at the Max Stern Athletic Center as many onlookers were forced to watch from the track. The game was extremely competitive as both teams traded baskets throughout the game. YULA came out the victor as they won by six. Chants of "finally" were heard from the Los Angeles fans as YULA has often come in second place in years past.

John Bandler who in addition to running the event, coached the second place MTA Lions, was asked how he felt about his teams performance. He responded, "I'm very pleased and proud of my guys. We started off as the sixth seed and went on to beat Flatbush, a team that not only

YESHIVA

SPORTS

won the Yeshiva League Championships but also defeated us during the regular season. We ran out of steam but it wasn't from lack of effort. We accomplished a lot in this tournament and lost to a very good team."

The tournament MVP was Eli Hammy from Los Angeles. The All-Tournament team consisted of Russ Shukes from Hillel of Miami, Eli Hammy from YULA, Eric Braun from MTA, Tamir Goodman from Baltimore, and Farzan Vlosgi from Valley Torah. When asked about the talent level in this year's tournament as opposed to years past, Coach Halpert said, "There are less potential college ball players in this tournament than past years. The local

schools are down whereas the out of town schools are up. I think these schools have improved largely because of the Sarachek tournament. The out of town schools have now become more interested in their basketball programs. I can see maybe three or four players possibly playing for the YU basketball team."

The 1998 Red Sarachek Tournament proved to be a great success. The attendance levels were high and the games were both competitive and exciting. This year's tournament will be remembered by a strong showing by MTA and the long awaited championship victory by the Yeshiva University of Los Angeles.

Dr. Ross Zucker

Professor of Political Science

will be presenting original research on

DEMOCRATIC DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Additional perspectives will be provided by

Rav Shalom Carmy:

Professor of Bible and Philosophy

Aaron Levine:

Professor of Economics

The discussion will take place on

Monday, April 6, 8pm

Furst 535 - Teachers Lounge

A catered dinner will be served.



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